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What are the instructional implications of use of the CATS Online Assessment Accommodation?

The regulation *on Inclusion of Special Populations in the State Required Assessment and Accountability Programs* (703 KAR 5:070) states the following under *General Conditions for Using Accommodations*:

General Conditions for Using Accommodations

Accommodations or modifications shall meet the following conditions:

- (1) Accommodations or modifications in the instructional process shall be both age-appropriate and related to both the student's verified disability and specially designed instruction described in the student's IEP or intervention strategies and modifications described in the student's 504 Plan. Accommodations or modifications shall be based on the individual needs of the student and not on a disability category (e.g., emotional-behavior disabilities, specific learning disabilities, multiple disabilities, other health impairment, etc.);
- (2) Accommodations or modifications shall be part of the student's ongoing instructional program and not introduced for the first time during state-required Assessment;
- (3) Accommodations or modifications shall be for the purpose of students accessing the general education curriculum and demonstrating what they know and are able to do;
- (4) Changes in the administration of the assessment or recording of student responses shall be consistent with the instructional strategies, assistive technology devices, and services identified on the student's Individual Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan (not Remedial Plan); and
- (5) Accommodations or modifications or both shall not inappropriately impact the content being measured.

As noted in the criteria listed above, the use of an accommodation is grounded in the student's use of instructional accommodations in the classroom on an ongoing basis consistent with his or her IEP. Accommodations not listed in the student's IEP nor fully integrated into instructional routines are not to be utilized during a spring state assessment event. A student whose disability prevents him or her from being able to use traditional means to access printed content may result in needing to have the content "read" to them in order to access the general curriculum to the same extent as other students. Many students with disabilities have utilized a "human reader" over the years as an accommodation to help them understand printed materials. A number of these same students are now using technology (e.g., textreaders or screenreaders) to perform the classroom "reading" function formerly provided by persons. There are some important differences, however, that need to be addressed when this technology is used to replace many of the functions of human readers:

1. Students need to be taught how to use the computer hardware and reader software independently.

2. Curriculum materials are being presented to the student in a digitized format for use on the computer.
3. Technology (e.g., textreader or screenreader software) will need to be the primary means used by the student for accessing printed material in the classroom setting on a routine basis.

Only occasional (e.g., monthly) or cursory use of this technology for accessing printed material in the classroom setting is **NOT** sufficient for application of this accommodation for the KCCT. Much time and effort for integration of use of this technology into classroom instruction needs to precede possible use of this accommodation on the KCCT, including development and presentation of general curriculum materials in digital format and student fluency in use of the technology.

When a teacher or other school staff accesses the CATS Online Assessment and attempts to create a student account for taking the test online, he or she will be asked to verify (i.e., checkbox) that the student meets the **ALL** the eligibility criteria for use of the online assessment accommodation as follows:

CATS Online Assessment Eligibility Criteria

1. Student has an Individual Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan that specifies the need for a “reader” as a classroom instructional and assessment accommodation, (i.e., Student’s IEP or includes specific goals and objectives and specially designed instruction related to reading or describes assistive technology necessary for the student to access, be involved in, and progress in the general curriculum) and;
2. Student routinely requires and uses textreader or screenreader technology to access printed materials in classroom instruction and assessment, and;
3. Student has entered and used the CATS Online Practice Area to develop familiarity with online assessment operations and use of his or her hardware and software.

Students who do not meet **ALL** three of these eligibility criteria should not participate in the CATS Online Assessment. Documentation should exist to verify that a student meets these criteria before any student participates in the CATS Online Assessment.